

Tonto National Forest Outfitter-Guide Forest Plan Amendment Effects to Heritage Resources

**By
Steve Germick,
Archaeologist, Tonto National Forest**

Affected Environment

On the Tonto National Forest, over 10,000 archaeological sites have been inventoried to date with an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 sites thought to be located within the 2.9 million acres administered by the Forest. Site types represent an 11,000 year occupation ranging from Paleo-Indian and Archaic groups thru Hohokam and Salado populations, to more recent proto-historic and historic use-occupations. Prehistoric heritage properties include a wide variety of structures and features ranging from lithic scatters to multi-room prehistoric settlements. The prehistoric occupation varies from artifact scatters indicative of subsurface pithouse occupations to collapsed stone masonry structures ranging from single room field houses to large room block and compound sites, water control devices such as check dams and terraces, and roasting pits for processing foodstuffs. Proto-historic and historic sites reflect the use and occupation by Yavapai and Apache hunter-gatherers and farmers, Euro-American soldiers, ranchers, stockmen, miners and prospectors, and government sponsored work projects such as those undertaken by the Civilian Conservation Corps. These sites range from Native American camp sites to historic military outposts, homesteads-cattle ranches, both large and small-scale mining and ore processing sites to CCC built structures and forest administered sites.

Alternative 1: No Action

Under the No Action alternative, priority permits would not be issued and service day allocations would remain the same. Outfitter-guide administration would not be in compliance with Forest Service policy. There are no anticipated direct effects to heritage resources, since management of outfitter-guide use would remain the same.

Alternative 2: The Proposed Action

Impacts to heritage resources, especially archeological sites, are generally defined as anything that results in the removal of, displacement of, or damage to artifacts, features, and/or stratigraphic deposits of cultural material. In the case of heritage resources, which are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, this can also include alterations of a property's setting or context. For traditional cultural properties and sacred places, additional considerations may include alterations in the presence or availability of particular plant species. Heritage resources, depending on their nature and composition, are subject to several different types of impact from activities associated with outfitter-guide use. Direct impacts from outfitter-guide use are those resulting from concentrated use of a site such as camping.

Indirect impacts include erosion and changes in vegetative composition and density that alter the setting and geographic context of sites. Given the non-renewable nature of heritage resources -- particularly archeological and historic sites -- any portion of them that has been damaged or

Tonto National Forest Heritage Specialist Report for Outfitter-Guide Environmental Assessment

removed diminishes their cultural and scientific value permanently. The missing parts cannot be replaced. Therefore, all effects to heritage resources are considered cumulative.

Based on a history of observation and consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), outfitter-guide use is not considered, in and of itself, to constitute an effect on heritage resources when the use occurs on designated roads and trails. Any recurring use outside of designated roads and trails that could impact heritage resources would require archaeological surveys.